

## EAST GERMAN COMMUNISTS STRANGLE ACADEMIC FREEDOM

### German University Tradition

The world-wide renown of German universities as outstanding institutions of learning and scholarship derives from the spirit of liberalism and dedication to research and the pursuit of knowledge which became such an integral part of university tradition during the early nineteenth century. Under the guidance of such men as Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767-1835), Hegel (1770-1831), Fichte (1762-1814), Schleiermacher (1786-1834), and Alexander von Humboldt (1769-1859), the German university became characterized by the twin ideas of academic freedom and university autonomy.

The outstanding feature of the system was the freedom of the professor to teach what he chose and the student to learn what he chose. Although always supported by the State and therefore subject to supervision, the universities were autonomous in matters of academic concern, with the University Senate being the highest authority.

The German university spirit has been graphically described by C. H. Becker, German scholar and politician (1876-1933), in a speech to the Third Annual Congress of European Student Relief in July 1924:

"Pure knowledge is a sacred matter for the Germans. He who dedicates his life to it has priestly rank, but he also has sacred duties and bears a heavy responsibility. The nation willingly gives the scholar a prominent social position, not because he forms future servants of the state or develops candidates for industry, but because the nation recognizes the necessity that the servants of knowledge must be free and independent.

"...I believe that there is no country in the world, no matter how free, in which the freedom to teach of the university professor is as unconditionally and generally advanced and protected as in Germany. The strongest governmental powers must yield before this demand of the intellectual tradition of Germany...Even Humboldt believed that

he could keep the state apart from his educational structure...The university watches carefully over its rights as an academic corporation. Its rights are manifold and significant...."

### West German Practices

Although academic freedom and university autonomy were non-existent during the Hitlerite era, the traditional system was reinstituted with only slight modifications in West German universities following the end of the war. Indeed, not only did universities again become autonomous, rejecting any political interference in academic affairs, but, when necessary, a university has been able to make its influence and prestige felt to the extent of reversing a political decision deemed potentially dangerous to academic freedom. The Göttingen University incident is a case in point.

On 26 May 1955, the Rector of Göttingen University as well as all members of the University Senate resigned, and a few hours later the student government organization called for a student strike on the following day. The unprecedented actions were a protest against the appointment of one Franz Leonhard Schlüter as the new Minister of Cultural Affairs in the cabinet of the Lower Saxony Land.

Like all West German universities, Göttingen is supported by the State government, and the State Ministry of Cultural Affairs is charged with responsibility for the general activities of the university, although the institution is autonomous as regards administrative and educational activities. The university faculty and students thought this autonomy was endangered by Schlüter's appointment. They felt that Schlüter, only 34 years old, was too young to have the maturity required to be charged with educational matters and, perhaps more significantly, that his past activities, including political flirting with the neo-Nazi right, showed him to be an ambitious, unprincipled political opportunist.

Although the State government had made the Schlüter appointment to assure a working majority in the State parliament, it was unable to withstand the pressure of

the university, whose stand received the warm support of all other West German universities, of a large part of the West German public, and of the entire population of the town of Göttingen itself. On 4 June, Schlüter requested a leave of absence and on 9 June he submitted his resignation. Thereupon, the danger to its cherished autonomy having passed, the university resumed its normal activities.

#### State Control in East Germany

Such action today by an East German university would be both inconceivable and impossible. In East Germany (German Democratic Republic - DDR), the traditional university system, interrupted by the Nazis, has not been restored. Indeed, the rigid State control of education imposed by the Hitler regime has been further intensified and perfected by the DDR Communist regime.

Education in the DDR, unlike that in West Germany, is no longer aimed at educating and perfecting the personality and abilities of an individual as an end in itself, which also incidentally serves and benefits the whole of society. It is pure and devoted service to the State, which selects the student, decrees what he may learn, maintains him financially, and assumes responsibility for testing periodically not only his abilities but also his unwavering loyalty to the Communist State and society. Similarly, only scholarship and research which serves to confirm the established policies and ideology of the State is permitted.

The number of students in a DDR university and in its separate disciplines does not depend on the number prepared but on the master-plan of the moment. Slavish imitation of the Soviet model has turned the DDR universities into nothing more than an assemblage of specialized technical institutes. Those who deny the existence of the mind and spirit fear nothing so much as the mind, therefore no individual thinking--the essence of an educated mind--is allowed. Communism demands not a universally cultivated whole man but rather a trained functionary capable of carrying out orders but without any sense of responsibility for, or perspective of, the

whole. Intelligence and ability are rated second to political reliability. Hence DDR education is characterized by political indoctrination and by the compulsory study of one specialized subject and, more than that, specialization within one subject.

To achieve Communism's aims, first the Soviet occupation regime and, since 1949, the DDR regime have carried out policies which have destroyed the integrity of the East German universities and radically transformed their membership and organization. These policies have destroyed all trace of university autonomy and academic freedom.

On the basis of a study made in 1956, the Sixth International Student Conference found that "there exists in East Germany a clear pattern of suppression of free educational practices, university autonomy and academic freedom through governmental intervention....there is a political control over and inside the university and its teaching body which prevents universities from fulfilling their traditional purposes."

Although the subjection of East German universities to political control began immediately upon the Soviet occupation in 1945, the crowning touch came in 1951 with the creation of an independent State Secretariat of Higher Education, which was given complete authority over appointments of professors, outlines of courses, assignment of required reading, and every other aspect of university life, including even such minor administrative matters as the number of wastebaskets an institution might buy. The State Secretariat was especially charged with the promotion of compulsory courses on Marxism-Leninism.

In the original decree the authority of the State Secretariat was limited only by a provision that the technical ministries were to retain operational control of the technical institutions in their respective fields. This restriction was later lifted by the 32nd Plenary Session (1957) of the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party (East German Communist Party - SED), which authorized the placing of "all institutions of higher education--with the exception of the School of Education at Potsdam, the Pedagogical Institutes, and the schools for the Fine Arts--under the control of the State Secretariat in order to assure unified political, scientific, technical, and organizational leadership."

In West Germany, the university rector is elected by the university senate and is the effective head of the university, with responsibility for the total administration of the university, including the academic and research programs. In East Germany, the rector is still elected by the Senate, but he has been largely reduced to a ceremonial figurehead and administrative inferior. No longer is he responsible to the Senate, but rather to the State Secretary, who must approve his election as well as that of the deans of the individual faculties.

The major impingement on the position of the rector results from the third implementation regulation to the 1951 reorganization law. The regulation provided that the State Secretary was to appoint directly at each university four prorectors charged with (a) research, (b) scientific affairs, (c) student affairs and (d) the basic (and compulsory) Marxist-Leninist and Russian language courses. On 28 March 1957, the scientific prorectorship was renamed the "Prorectorate for the Coming Academic Generation," with authority over the counseling and encouragement of future academicians and the duty of ratifying the rector's decisions regarding the appointments and dismissals of scientific assistants. Final authority, of course, remains with the State Secretary. On 8 April 1957, the student affairs prorectorate was expanded and given authority over all matters of academic study so that a "consistent socialist personnel policy in student matters" might be guaranteed.

The 1951 decrees had reduced the University Senates to impotence although their traditional membership--rector, faculty deans, and faculty representatives--remained largely unchanged. But by a regulation of 13 February 1958, even this element of university life was completely subverted to political control. By virtue of the regulation University Senates are no longer composed solely of academic figures but must include also representatives of mass organizations--the Free German Youth (FDJ) and the Free German Trade Union Federation (FDGB)--to assure a politically reliable majority.

By July 1958 the new regime was in effect and the Senates at each of the DDR's seven major institutions of higher learning, for example, included a safe majority of SED members:

<u>Institution</u>	<u>Senate Members</u>	
	<u>Total Membership</u>	<u>No. of SED Members</u>
Berlin (Humboldt U.)	24	15
Leipzig (Karl Marx U.)	22	15
Halle (Martin Luther U.)	25	16
Jena (Friedrich Schiller U.)	17	11
Rostock (U. of Rostock)	22	13
Griefswald (Ernst Arndt U.)	17	12
Dresden Institute of Technology	26	14

#### Status of DDR Teachers

The DDR has admittedly expended great effort and large sums on its educational system, for in common with other Communist states it sees the best hope for its stability and permanence in capturing and molding the minds of the coming generation. Hence, not only have the seven long-established major institutions (see above) been expanded but a large number (39) of specialized institutions of university rank have been established, thus raising the number of university students from about 12,000 in 1946 to between 75,000 and 100,000 today.

The faculty members of these institutions are, in general, well treated. Salaries range up to three times as much as those received by their West German colleagues. The payscale ranges from 7,400 to 24,000 marks per year, with an extra 300 to 600 marks per year to teachers in Berlin. In addition there are increments for national prize winners, "Heroes of Labor," members of the Academy of Scientists, and for "distinguished" teachers, scientists and engineers. University faculty members can also count on increased pensions, special fees for guest lectures, advantages in the purchase of a wide range of goods, and State assistance in the building of private homes.

In return for these privileges, members of the university teaching staff renounce intellectual integrity, acquiesce in the attacks on the traditional autonomy of the universities, mouth the pseudo-scientific jargon of the Communist ideology, and evidence their loyalty to the ruling regime. They must accept the fact that the East German educational system now exists solely to serve Party

policy and aims. Kurt Hager, Secretary of the SED Central Committee, stated quite frankly at a university conference in early 1958 that "when some non-Party scientists raise the question whether the Party has the right to interfere in the affairs of the universities, we must answer that the Party not only has the right but the duty."

Since Communism claims to have the one valid truth--the so-called law of historical evolution--all scholarship, research and teaching must conform to this pseudo-religious gospel. Both professors and students, regardless of the field, must work within the framework of the "scientific principles" of Marxism-Leninism. "Soviet science" must be slavishly imitated, and the "objectivism of bourgeois scholarship," as unprejudiced empirical research is called, is strictly forbidden. Scholarship, in other words, must only be the interpreter of a priori given truths.

As an East Berlin radio broadcast of 27 January 1958 declared, "the universities of the DDR must finally overthrow the idea of science for science's sake...." Shortly thereafter, in a lecture to teachers at Plauen, Werner Lorenz, Secretary of the Chemnitz SED Bezirk Committee, declared that a teacher who failed to profess Marxism-Leninism must be viewed in the same light as an illiterate who attempted to teach others how to read and write. Werner Herings, Deputy Director of the Scientific Department of the SED Central Committee, touched on the same matter in an article published in the 28 February 1958 issue of Neues Deutschland, the official SED organ. According to Herings, "the Party expects from a Marxist scholar or scientist that he canvasses for the Party, that he resolutely repels and fights against alien and bourgeois opinions, and that he makes every effort to creatively leaven all disciplines of science with the weltanschauung of the workers' class, Marxism-Leninism."

The official DDR view of education and research was perhaps stated with even greater clarity by Kurt Hager at the 3rd Higher Education Conference of the SED, held in East Berlin on 28 February-2 March 1958. "The point is," he declared, "to secure a fundamental change in the content and methods of research, training, and education at universities and colleges so as to achieve the complete conformity of higher education with the requirement of socialist development." According to Hager, this meant that: (a) lecturers and students must acquire the tenets

of dialectical materialism; (b) socialist principles must be applied in research; (c) teaching, training and education must be guided by socialist maxims; and (d) new bases for the selection and admission of students must be established.

Since scholars and educators do not serve the ends of true education but rather the political goals of the State, their research is accordingly restricted. The State Secretariat maintains rigid control over any research requiring the expenditure of funds, particularly the work of institutes and seminars, and approved research is strictly confined to utilitarian objectives, which do not usually lend themselves to the enrichment of instruction. Moreover, the publication of research papers is in the hands of State-controlled publishing houses, so that any scholar who dares to undertake research not officially approved finds himself unable to publish the results.

As might be expected, control in the social sciences is especially rigid. In the field of history, for example, the truth must be avoided or warped to accord with the current Party line and Communist ideology. Economic research and publications must reflect the Marxist theme of capitalist exploitation and Communist achievement, whatever may be the facts. In psychology, choice of research problems must be made within an officially approved area, for example, the psychology of work or of sports. Psychological research along Western lines (study of personality, social psychology, clinical psychology, etc.) is virtually unknown.

The restriction of research to politically desirable objectives is especially reflected in a program drafted for the Karl Marx University (Leipzig) by the local SED office in 1958. The program provided, for example, that the Institute of the History of Religion should become "a center of atheistic research and propaganda" and the Institute of Slavistics, "a center serving to canvass for the achievement of the Soviet Union and the Slavic People's Democracies."

Educators face restrictions not only on research but on teaching itself. The system now in force in the DDR reduces professors and lecturers to little more than



parrots who pass on verbatim what has been approved by the State Secretariat. The subject and content of lectures are no longer at the discretion of individual professors but are rigidly fixed by the State Secretariat, which prepares a minutely detailed syllabus and study plans for every course, including even the reading to be assigned. At the beginning of each academic year, professors and lecturers are required to put the complete text of their lectures--prepared in accordance with the State Secretariat's syllabus--at the disposal of the students. In this way, planted informers and Party-line students can spot the slightest deviation from the approved text and denounce the professor involved.

In matters of discipline, faculty members are not responsible merely to the University Senate. Charges can be filed by any member of the teaching staff, the director of personnel, or by the leadership of the mass organizations represented at the university, such as the FDJ. Heads of government agencies can also order disciplinary action against a university faculty member; while the State Secretary can dismiss any faculty member even without charges if he so desires.

### Curricula

Since the aim of DDR universities is to produce politically reliable technicians, the former general education courses have been scrapped in favor of courses on Marxism-Leninism. As early as 1948 compulsory political lectures were introduced for all students. In 1950, a minimum course in "social sciences" was announced, which included lectures in political economy, historical and dialectical materialism, modern history, government, and political and social problems of the day. Works of Marx, Lenin, Stalin, Plekhanov, as well as DDR Communists such as Ulbricht and Norden, were made prescribed reading.

Today, the basis of the DDR university system is a 3-year compulsory "Social Sciences Basic Course," covering: "(a) Foundations of Marxism-Leninism, (b) Foundations of Political Economy, and (c) Dialectical and Historical Materialism." The avowed aim is to ensure full understanding and agreement with the aims and fundamentals of Marxism as the basic philosophy underlying all learning. Failure

by a student in the intermediate examination in the course is grounds for dismissal, as are two absences from course lectures. The final examination in the course must be passed before a student is allowed to sit for the final examination in the subject of his specialty.

This system, copied from the Soviets, understandably puts a premium on outward performance. Students, whatever their true feelings about Communism, must and do become word-perfect in the terminology of dialectical materialism and fully able to recite from Marxist scriptures when asked to do so. They must move through their student life in a mask, forced to accept a minimum of conformity in order to survive and to be able to avail themselves of the chance to attend a university.

The propagandistic tone of all textbooks and teaching materials has created among DDR students a great desire for factual information. Libraries, of course, have been purged of all books at variance with the Communist line.

The search for undistorted material accounts in large part for the attraction to students of West Berlin, where data which they can believe may be found. This extends also to teachers. At an SED conference in East Berlin on 13 May 1957, for example, Ulbricht complained that teachers at the Academy of State and Law were using Marx and Engels superficially as textbooks but carried on basic study with the help of Western law books. He also complained about the preference of both students and professors for factual instruction rather than "socialistic education."

Other compulsory elements of the university curriculum are Russian language and literature, and sports and military training. To become eligible to graduate, a student must have successfully passed the marksmanship course and demonstrated a competence to handle the Soviet literature in his field as well as general political texts.

The compulsory Russian courses are strongly resented, especially by students in fields where other foreign languages would be more valuable. In 1957, for example, medical students at the Jena University approached their dean, Prof. Hofmann, with the request that obligatory Russian courses be dropped. The dean agreed with the justice of the request and, with unusual daring, declared publicly

that "this demand has the full support of the Faculty Council, including me. I would like to say that in my opinion, it is not only the Russian lessons which burden our medical students but also others, such as, for instance, political economy." Needless to say, the requirements were not changed.

These compulsory courses--social science, Russian and sports--occupy almost one-third of a student's total class work. In law, for example, they consume 1,041 of the 3,459 class-hours of the 4-year course; in history it is 1,557 out of 4,064 class-hours; and in philosophy 1,406 out of 4,455 class-hours. Similar ratios pertain in the other disciplines.

Several examples can be cited to show the ridiculous extremes to which this emphasis on political courses is carried. A mathematics teacher would normally (in the West, at least) be expected to be proficient in mathematics. In the DDR, however, he must primarily demonstrate his ability in "dialectical and historical materialism, the Marxist-Leninism theory of cognizance, the Marxist-Leninist theory of basis and superstructure, and the materialistic roots of mathematics." A teacher candidate in German literature must, above all else, prove competence in something called "Stalinist Science of Speech."

One result is that many East German degrees are not recognized in West Germany on the grounds that the holder's education has not been adequate. While West Germany generally recognizes degrees in mathematics, medicine and physics, it absolutely refuses to accept those in law and political science; while degrees in the humanities, history and philosophy may or may not be, depending on the individual involved and where he studied.

#### University Admissions

Article 35 of the DDR Constitution asserts that "every citizen has an equal right to education." Article 38 declares that "Members of all classes of the population shall be given an opportunity to acquire knowledge in colleges of the people," while Article 39 asserts that "the school career of youth must on no account depend on the social or economic position of the parents."

In practice, these constitutional guarantees are completely ignored. Not the Constitution but SED decisions and regulations issued in pursuance thereof by the State Secretariat determine who shall and who shall not be permitted to acquire an education. Ability and intelligence are no longer a criteria for university admission, which is handled on an entirely non-academic basis. Social origin and Party activity of applicants and their parents and "active support of government policy" have become the guiding criteria.

By regulation, at least 60 percent of the students at institutions of higher education must be of worker-peasant origin. The system means that a laborer with no talent may well be admitted, while a gifted child is refused admission because he had the wrong parents.

To assure the admission only of "those who have proved their devotion to the Workers' and Peasants' State," admission procedures have been taken out of the hands of the rector. By virtue of a regulation of 24 February 1958, the Admissions Board at each university is composed of: (a) the Prorector for Academic Affairs, as chairman; (b) the Prorector for Socio-Political Basic Studies, as deputy chairman; (c) the respective dean or faculty head; (d) FDJ and FDGB representatives; (e) a representative of the sponsoring industrial firm; and (f) the respective branch chief of the Prorectorate for Academic Affairs, as secretary.

This admission policy, coupled with the great expansion of the university system, has undoubtedly made university education available to many of the lower classes, who might not otherwise be able to attend college. Whereas only five percent of German university students were from worker families before the war, more than 50 percent of all DDR students are from that class. It must be noted in this connection, however, that many of the students are children of members of the Party and state bureaucracy, who are "workers" only by definition. Actual working class students are probably not more than 25 percent.

Social origin, however, is not the only admission criteria. The DDR regime has long tried to force students to devote their vacations to physical labor, but without result. Speaking to the FDJ Central Council in January

1958, Hans Dahlem, Deputy State Secretary for Higher Education, complained that in 1957 only 38 percent of the then 73,000 university students had undertaken such practical work during their vacations. Of the 1,100 medical students at Jena University, only 60 had responded.

This desire to involve students in physical labor has now been solved in a somewhat different manner. On 4 May 1958, the State Secretariat issued a regulation providing that henceforth no student would be admitted to a university until he had served for one year in industry or agriculture or in the army. The explanation of the regulation by State Secretary Dr. Wilhelm Girnus, published in the same day's issue of Neues Deutschland, reveals the absurd mentality governing education in the DDR as well as the total subjection of higher education to political requirements:

"The main purpose of this practical year is not to familiarize the high school graduate with the technical details of the production process. It is to instigate the student to establish close ties with the workers' class and the entire process of socialistic production.

"For example, it will do no harm to a student of German language and literature to handle dung on a people's-owned farm. On the contrary, it will help him later on during his professional study to come to understand much better the importance of the farmer for the entire field of literature.

"We must express with absolute clarity that students who are not committed to the task of socialistic development without reservation no longer have a right to be at our universities and other institutions of university rank, for the academic spirit can only be socialistic."

Also, any youth who has refused or neglected to join the FDJ is automatically suspect and therefore denied admission to college. For the same reason, youths who have refused to take the youth dedication oath (Jugendweihe)--the Communist atheistic substitute for church confirmation--is also denied the right to acquire a university education.

Since the Fall of 1958, matriculating university students have also been required, as the final part of the admission process, to take a loyalty oath:

"My education is made possible by our Workers' and Peasants' State, and I therefore assume the obligation to support the policy of the DDR Government at all times and to pursue the studies of the principles of dialectical and historical materialism, which, at the end of my studies, will be used to further Socialist construction. During my course of study I will cooperate in Socialist construction in industry and agriculture and be prepared to contribute to the strengthening of the defense of the DDR...."

An alternate version was administered to the 1,600 new students at the Karl Marx University in Leipzig in September 1958:

"I vow to carry out my studies at the Karl Marx University in the spirit of socialism, to support actively the policy of the DDR Government, and to acquire a comprehensive knowledge on the basis of historical materialism."

#### Scholarships

Those students who do win admission to a university or institution of university rank and who conform, at least outwardly to the demands made on them, are treated exceedingly well. Tuition fees were abolished on 1 January 1957, and at least 94 percent of the students receive monthly stipends (scholarships) from the State, as compared to only 25 percent in West Germany.

By law, workers and peasants and their children are entitled to a stipend of 180 marks per month, while State employees, members of the creative intelligentsia and persons enjoying special privileges and the children of members of these groups get 130 marks per month. Bonuses are also paid for excellence of work, so that it is possible for a student to receive as much as 480 marks per month. In addition, every student receives social and accident insurance and access to free medical care and cheap student restaurants. In return, however, he must surrender his mind to the State.

### Student Discipline

Student government is unknown in the DDR, nor are students allowed to form any sort of club or association. All student activities are strictly controlled and must take place within the framework of the local branch of the FDJ, the only youth organization permitted.

Discipline and control are carried out primarily through a so-called seminar system. At the time of his first registration, every student is assigned to a seminar of about 20 persons, in which he generally remains throughout his university days. The seminar has the official task of assisting the faculty in "training the academic youth to become qualified scientific workers for the development of socialism."

The seminar meets weekly under the nominal chairmanship of a teaching assistant to discuss and interpret the week's lectures. Attendance is compulsory and is carefully checked by the seminar secretary, who actually is in charge. Chosen on the basis of political activity by the seminar in cooperation with the FDJ--which means, in effect, that he is appointed by the FDJ--the secretary maintains a record of the progress of each student, checks course lecture attendance and fulfillment of study requirements, notes political tendencies, etc. The secretary's role is important since an adverse report by him on any student will result in the student's expulsion.

The aim of the seminars seems to be threefold: (1) to guide the student's political development along the proper lines, (2) to check on any possible deviationist tendencies, and (3) to occupy whatever leisure time may be left to the student after his classes.

To further control students and assure their political reliability, the regime has severely restricted student travel to areas and countries where they might be tainted by the air of freedom. By virtue of a decree issued by the State Secretariat on 24 May 1957, students (high school as well as university) are forbidden to travel to NATO countries (including West Germany) without special written permission. In practice this excludes all visits in a private capacity with the exception of visits to close relatives in West Germany or participation in events organized or officially sanctioned by the proper DDR authorities.

Violation of the travel restriction is grounds for expulsion, for student discipline has become a State, rather than merely a university, concern. Although the university may still take action in cases of academic failures, most expulsions are for political reasons. The insecurity of the student's position was graphically illustrated by the Bollhaus case. In September 1958, Robert Bollhaus, an engineer at the VEB Leipzig Iron and Steel Plant, was sentenced by a Leipzig court to eight months in jail for "preparing to defect from the DDR." Immediately thereafter, his son--for the sole reason of being his son--was expelled from Leipzig University, and it was also decreed that his daughter would not be admitted to high school.

#### Teacher-Student Defections

On 1 September 1958, the 400th anniversary of the founding of the University of Jena (Friedrich Schiller Universitaet) was officially celebrated. The East German regime had left nothing undone to make it an impressive occasion, and guests from universities in every country in the world, except South Korea, South Vietnam and the Republic of China, had been invited to participate in the ceremonies honoring the institution where Karl Marx, the archpriest of Communism, was once a student. But in spite of all the regime's efforts, the affair was a dismal and embarrassing failure, for the scheduled official host, the Rector of the University, was conspicuously absent.

On 21 August, Prof. Joseph Haemel, the Rector, had traveled to East Berlin in answer to a summons by the State Secretary for Higher Education, who had decreed his presence at a press conference on 22 August, arranged as part of the anniversary celebration. Once in Berlin, Haemel took advantage of the situation to slip into West Berlin and there request asylum.

At a press conference in West Berlin on 26 August, Haemel explained why, after seven years as Rector, he had abandoned his job, his possessions and his future to seek refuge in the West as thousands of his fellow East Germans had been--and still are--doing monthly. "My inner convictions," he declared, "did not allow me to share the guilt of guiding my school towards the completely alien ideas of their so-called socialism."



Haemel then discussed the inner conflict that rages in all East German educators and scientists. They are extremely well-paid and are doing useful work, yet the restrictions on travel and on contacts with Western colleagues, the dislike of seeing their children educated as Communists, the perversion of the East German universities into political indoctrination centers, and the suppression of academic freedom and corruption of the spirit of research all make acceptance of the Communist system increasingly "unbearable." Haemel was quite pessimistic about the future and expressed the view that the East German universities were engaged in "a long, losing battle to retain intellectual freedom against Communist encroachments."

Haemel's defection was not an isolated incident. Among the stream of East Germans constantly seeking asylum in the West, there is an increasing number of teachers, professors, and students, who, like Haemel, have found the Communist educational policies unbearable. The number of such refugees has increased markedly since the SED 5th Party Congress in July 1958 ordered the institution of a more stringent party program in the field of education.

The defections have been in such numbers that the DDR education system has been seriously affected. As Haemel noted in his press conference, the resulting vacancies are always filled but always with poorly trained and inexperienced persons with the most questionable academic qualifications, providing they are politically reliable. The inevitable result, Haemel noted, was a striking drop in university standards.

One need only to consider the figures on defections during the period 1954-1958 to gain an idea of their impact on the DDR education system:

	Total 1954-1958	1954	1955	1956	1957	1958
School teachers	12,600	2,045	2,720	2,453	2,293	3,089*
University professors and assistants	393	28	56	43	58	208**
Students beyond High School	8,561	879	1,835	1,431	1,894	2,522

\* Of this total, 1,044 were "old" teachers and 2,045 "new" teachers (i.e., trained after 1954).

\*\* Of this total, 109 were "old" professors and 99 "new" professors.

The above figures relate only to the end of 1958, but the stream still continues and appears to be increasing. During the single brief period of 1 March-18 April 1959, a total of 95 professors, lecturers and assistant lecturers defected to the West. Included was the venerable Dr. Herbert Koch, 79, Professor of Classic Archeology at Halle University, where he had taught for 28 years.

The defectors have included many of East Germany's most distinguished scholars, including some whose reputations are world-wide. They represent every scientific establishment and institution of higher learning in the DDR, and every discipline. Most have been influenced by the same factors which induced Prof. Haemel to defect--the lack of academic freedom and perversion of the educational system. As an outstanding example, one can cite Dr. Friederich Leutwein, Director of the East German Institute for Mining, Professor at the Freiburg Mining Academy, and the DDR's foremost expert in the field of applied geology and geophysics. Upon his arrival in the West in late September 1958, he explained that he could not bring himself to accept the new SED educational policies.

In some cases the desire to escape political persecution was the motivating factor. For example, Dr. Erich Reizenstein, Professor of Classical Philology at Halle University, defected in late 1958 after Dr. Girnus, the State Secretary for Higher Education, had charged him with having "attitudes inimical to the state." Dr. Hans Haussherr, head of Halle's History Department, fled on 1 December 1958 after he had published an article in which he asserted that every German should have the right to vote in free elections. Four days later he was followed by Dr. Heino Maedebach, Director of the Sculpture Department of the East Berlin State Museums, who had written an article for a West German newspaper on a sculpture collection returned to East Berlin by the Soviets in October and had refused an SED demand that he send a correction to the paper in regard to his failure to have mentioned a speech by DDR Premier Grotewohl praising the return as "a generous gift from the Soviet Union."

None of these defectors put any faith whatever in the assurances of Article 9 of the DDR Constitution, which asserts that

"All citizens have, within the limits of the laws applying to all of them, the right to utter their opinions freely and openly and for this purpose to meet peacefully and unarmed. Nobody making use of this right can be persecuted."

Educators, like all other elements of the DDR population, are quite aware that, the Constitution notwithstanding, the slightest expression of disapproval of the Party line means jail for the speaker. In fact, writing in Neues Deutschland on 21 December 1958, Erich Wollweber, then Minister for State Security, declared that "it is only natural that a so-called 'free' discussion cannot and must not be tolerated in the DDR...."

The exact number of educators and students who now languish in DDR jails and concentration camps is not available, but it is known to be high. They include even dedicated Communists, who made the mistake of failing to follow the Party line in all its details. The most outstanding example is, of course, Prof. Wolfgang Harich, who was sentenced to 10 years in jail in May 1957 for suggesting that East German Communists should assert their independence from Moscow.

#### The Two Berlin Universities

The contrast between the university systems in East and West Germany can be seen today with striking clarity in Berlin.

In East Berlin, not far from the Brandenburg Gate, is located the once famous Friedrich Wilhelm University of Berlin, founded in 1810 by the Prussian scholar and statesman, Wilhelm von Humboldt. It was this institution which began the cultural regeneration of a Germany shattered by Napoleon and which shaped the tradition of academic freedom that came to characterize all German universities during the nineteenth century.

By the end of World War II in 1945, the battered University had ceased to operate. Faculty and students, however, were eager to resume, and at first the Soviets seemed to share their aim. Plans were soon formulated to reopen the University, at first renamed Linden University, after Unter den Linden on which it is located, and later Humboldt University, after its founder.

The Russians announced that this would not be merely the reopening of the old school but the formation of a new one. There is, indeed, no resemblance between the old and the new. The model of German academic freedom and scholarship has become the model of politically oriented technical training. The humanities have been discarded in favor of dialectical materialism, the library and bookstores have been purged of the fruits of centuries of German scholarship. The writings of the German philosophical schools are represented by one slim volume of Hegel, which can be favorably interpreted by the Communists. For the rest, the student must be content with the works of Marx, Engels, Lenin and other Soviet writers.

As in other DDR institutions, dialectical materialism has been made the basis of all study at Humboldt University. When one professor ventured the opinion that East Germany was backward in mathematical research, he was pointedly told that he would have to show in class how dialectical materialism could be made useful for such research. The application of "democratic centralism" ended the traditional university autonomy and made the University Senate an echo of the central educational authorities.

The purge soon began of all professors and students who resisted the destruction of the University's traditions and standards. Many resigned, some were dismissed, others were arrested, to be heard of no more. The first student martyr was Gerhard Wradzidlo, a student leader in the medical school, who was arrested in March 1947 and subsequently sentenced to 25 years in jail on charges of opposing Communist influence on the University and protesting the adornment of university buildings with Communist emblems.

A series of other incidents followed. Finally, during the winter of 1947-1948, the Soviet authorities silenced the student newspaper Colloquium and expelled three student editors. Both the faculty and student body vigorously protested the expulsions, and the University Senate officially demanded of the authorities that the three students be reinstated. The protests were curtly rejected. An additional cause for discontent was the disregard by the authorities of the results of a student council election, in which 90 percent of the students elected were anti-Communists.

It was finally realized that the Soviets would never permit any degree of academic freedom. Students began to meet secretly in West Berlin to discuss the possibility of

establishing another university where the traditions and standards of the once respected Friedrich Wilhelm University could be continued. The idea was favorably received by West Berlin officials and supported by the Americans. In June 1948, the decision was taken to found a new Free University of Berlin to provide an alternative to "the charnel-house for academic thought," as one of its professors described Humboldt University.

Classes began in December 1948 with more than 2,000 students, most of them former students at Humboldt. At first, the Free University functioned in a collection of old buildings, barracks and private homes; but the spirit and not the surroundings was the important element. Contributions from students, faculty and private citizens sustained the Free University at first. Later, contributions by the Ford Foundation, the US Government, and the West Berlin and West German regimes have made possible the construction of an imposing and well-equipped set of classrooms, laboratories, dormitories, and other university buildings.

In its 10 years, the student body has grown from 2,100 to 11,000, one-fourth of them women and more than 3,000 of them refugees from the DDR. Defectors from the DDR also comprise a large percentage of the faculty. In its library of 120,000 volumes (plus 40,000 dissertations) may be found all the works which are denied to Humboldt students. And in its six faculties--medicine, veterinary medicine, law, economics and the social sciences, arts and mathematics, and the natural sciences--students pursue their studies unhampered by compulsory political indoctrination courses.

The Free University stands as a monument to the desire of German youth for true education and as a continuing center of academic freedom in Berlin. In the Free University, unlike its sister institution in East Berlin, the University Senate stands guard over the University's cherished autonomy. No state official presumes to tell the professors what they must say or the students what they can learn. Here, intellectual capacity is the governing criteria for admission.

The establishment and success of the Free University have done much to maintain the free intellectual spirit of Germany. While it can do little to help students in the DDR, it stands as a haven for those fortunate to reach its doors and as a symbol of protest against the ruthless suppression of free thought by the Communist rulers of East Germany.

EAST GERMAN COMMUNISTS STRANGLE ACADEMIC FREEDOM

May 1959

## APPENDIX A

### The Dresden Student Show Trials

On 13 April 1959, the ancient university city of Dresden witnessed the beginning of an example of Communist "justice." Five students from the Dresden Institute of Technology, who had earlier been arrested with 15 others, had been declared "ringleaders" of what the Communist judge called a "Nationalist Student Union." For their temerity in daring to organize a group not sanctioned by the regime, the five youths were being tried on charges of sabotage, terrorist activities, wishing to topple the East German SED regime, possession of weapons, collaboration with "Western Intelligence" organizations, etc.

The trial was only the latest in a long series involving students and educators who had been foolhardy enough to express dislike for the Communist regime and its policies. Despite the guarantee of free speech included in the DDR Constitution, any expression of opposition to the prevailing system is considered by the Government as high treason and punished accordingly. In 1958, 18 students from Jena University were sentenced to prison terms ranging from 3 to 15 years for "anti-state activities," which consisted of no more than drafting a 10-point program asking for free elections and the return of economic enterprises to private ownership.

The defendants in the recent Dresden "trial" were Gerhard Bauer, Arnim Streiter, Hans-Lutz Dalpke, Christian Ramatschi, and Dieter Brendel, all aged only 20 or 21. Fritz Reuter, SED Secretary for Dresden Bezirk, charged that the defendants had "sought the establishment of a Germany along Yugoslav lines." Such a desire, known in Communist circles as "Titoism" or "deviationism," implying a wish for true national independence and escape from Moscow's control, is the most horrendous crime possible in Communist eyes.

But since the Moscow-controlled rulers of the DDR wanted to avoid publicizing the existence of any "deviationist" tendencies in East Germany, the court and the prosecutor preferred to try the youths on other charges. They accused the defendants of having been "influenced by western newspapers and radio organizations" and of having committed the horrible crime

of writing a letter to the BBC. Since the letter had protested against an "Anti-Atomic Resolution" adopted by the West Berlin Student Congress, the court decided that the defendants had "become the helpers of the war-mongers."

The trial ran true to form. The defendants dutifully arose and outdid each other in their confessions. This is not surprising, for a long period of "investigative custody" had preceded the trial, and it need hardly be explained what "investigative custody" means in a Communist country. What the DDR secret police (SSD) do not recall of the refinements worked out by Hitler's Gestapo, they have been taught by the Soviet secret police which, after more than 40 years of experience, have become masters of their art. In reporting on the trial in its 15 April issue, the Berlin newspaper BZ remarked that one could "see the hand of the SSD in every aspect of this farce....The accused are saying what the SSD has told them to say."

During the trial, the Western press was barred from the courtroom because of "lack of space," and the only non-Communists admitted were three West German student observers, who were forbidden to take notes. They later told Western newspapermen that they had been disgusted by what they saw of DDR "justice."

The DDR authorities have never clarified the circumstances of the arrest of the five defendants and their 15 companions (whose fate remains a mystery), but it appears to stem from the increasing student unrest which has existed in East Germany since the Hungarian Revolution and the Wolfgang Harich affair. The political basis of the trial is quite clear from the fact that Dr. Leim, the Public Prosecutor, declared in his summation that the principal reason for the harsh sentences requested was the fact that Dr. Adenauer was standing for the office of President in West Germany and that this necessitated a high degree of vigilance in East Germany. Needless to say, Leim did not explain what this had to do with the charges against the youths on trial.

The fabrication or gross exaggeration of much of the "evidence" presented can be seen from several examples. The court and prosecutor persistently referred to the connections of the defendants with "criminal organizations," yet no attempt was made to prove their alleged connection with US Intelligence.



Their references to the West German Ministry of All-German Affairs and the West Berlin group known as "Fighters Against Inhumanity" only showed that the students had failed to establish contact with them.

The charges of "sabotage" and "terrorist activities" were based on the fact that several pistols and chemicals "suitable for the manufacture of explosives" were found in the defendants' possession. The court curtly refused a request by the defense counsel to show that the pistols were defective and incapable of being fired. The defense counsel, in fact, were warned by the court not to ask any questions which might be construed as indicating the innocence of their clients. It would be hard to find clearer proof of the farce of Communist justice: the final verdict is always decided before the trial begins.

Some of the evidence presented can only be termed ridiculous. Like high-spirited youths are prone to do throughout the world, they probably got together as a "secret society" to discuss political questions and to indulge in high-blown "bull sessions." This is easily explained by the complete lack of any freedom of speech and thought in the DDR.

Their plans and discussions could only be termed as youthful, immature, ill-advised, and ill-conceived bravado, but hardly serious plotting to overthrow the regime by force of arms.

Yet, the prosecution undertook to show on the basis of the admissions and confessions of the defendants while in "investigative custody" that they had on various occasions discussed the feasibility of "joining an attempt at a coup, which might possibly be initiated from the West, in an attempt to gather unto ourselves a good measure of power." Allegedly they even debated the probable use of tanks and other weapons.

As evidence of their terrorist activities, the defendants are said to have confessed that when one of their group--Gernat Frey, who turned state's evidence at the trial--indicated he wanted "out," they decided he must leave the country to avoid endangering their cause. They also had considered killing him with either an injection of air, an excessive dose of insulin or a poisoned air gun pellet. In regard to the disposition of the body, one of the "vicious ringleaders" suggested that it be sewn in a sack and dumped in an area where "a landslide could be started to cover it up."

These were the types of conversations pounced upon by the prosecution to prove the "atmosphere of terror" ascribed to the defendants.

The verdict handed down at the end of the trial could be expected by anyone with knowledge of Communist justice. The sentences were: Bauer, 10 years; Streiter, 8 years; Dalpke, 7½ years; Ramatschi, 7 years; and Brendel, 5 years. The only surprising fact was that the combined sentences totalled one and one-half years more than those demanded by the prosecutor. It is rare for a Communist prosecutor to understate his requirements, but the court explained that it was so acting because the five students "constituted a serious threat to organized society."

The DDR regime must rest on very shaky ground, indeed, if the high jinks of a few students are sufficient to jeopardize its existence.

APPENDIX B

Resume of Trials Against Students in East Germany

The Informationsburo West has published from its files a resume of political thought trials which have been waged against the students since the establishment of the East German Republic. The students were charged with being "counter-revolutionary elements." From 1951 to the end of 1958 there have been 16 such trials as a result of which 56 students from universities and high schools in the Soviet Zone have been sentenced to a total of 329 years in the penitentiary.

The most important have been:

June 1951: The Provincial Court of Dresden sentenced music student Rolf Schabe to seven years in the penitentiary. Reason: Schabe sent so-called "peace letters" to West Germany in which he inveighed against the East German Government and "attempted to find accomplices in this activity inimical to the government."

August 1951: The Provincial Court of Halle sentenced 11 students of the Martin Luther University to terms ranging from 10 to 15 years for "attempting to overthrow the government."

May 1952: The Provincial Court of Muehlhausen sentenced a female agricultural student named Friedgart Hense to four years and music student Hans Rummel to five years in the penitentiary. Reason: in their discussions the two students had demonstrated a "point of view inimical to the State," and had "illegally worked against the GDR."

July 1952: The Provincial Court of Muehlhausen sentenced the students of the Dresden Technical High School, Gunther Schlage, Erich Schmidt and Waltraud Niether, to a total of 22 years in the penitentiary. Reason: the three students had made up pamphlets and distributed them and the content "of these pamphlets was of such a nature as to endanger the existence of the workers' and peasants' state."

September 1953: The District Court of Halle sentenced student Jurgen Burkhardt to six years in the penitentiary. Reason: it was alleged that Burkhardt had been surprised by the Peoples' Police distributing pamphlets "hate mongering against the GDR." Furthermore, he had spread hatred "heard over the Western radio stations."

October 1953: The City Court of Berlin sentenced students of the Technical School for Interior Architecture and Wood Technique in Berlin, Klaus Krelle, Hans-Georg Haut and Hans Joachin Hermann, to a total of four and one-half years in the penitentiary. Reason: the students "had taken part in the fascist provocation of 17 June" and had forced members of the People's Police to release some workers who had already been arrested.

January 1954: The District Court of Gera sentenced a student of Fredrich Schiller University of Jena, Lutz Ehrhardt, to three and one-half years in prison. Reason: he had distributed literature "inimical to the State."

April 1954: The District Court of Halle sentenced dentist student Klaus Kother to eight years in prison. Reason: he had "belonged to the leading group of the 17 June 1953 putsch."

August 1955: The District Court of Rostock sentenced medical students of the University of Greifswald Klaus Rintelen and Peter Klopff to 10 and 8 years in prison respectively and three other students to several years in prison. Reason: they had protested that the traditional old medical faculty of the university was being transformed into a place for the medical training of members of the National People's Army and had incited fellow students to join a "political strike."

October 1957: The District Court of Suhl sentenced high school students of the Electro-Technical High School of Ilmenau, Rolf Schubert, Dietrich Lanzrath, and Jurgen Maack to a total of 10 years in prison. Reason: they had formed an "illegal counter-revolutionary group."

November 1957: The District Court of Leipzig sentenced student Leo Derrick to 15 months in prison. Reason: after the "counter-revolution" in Hungary he had tried to set up similar groups in the GDR and had leftist revisionist tendencies.

December 1957: The District Court of Leipzig sentenced theological students Andreas Jentsch and Wolfgang Wohllebe to a total of four years in prison. Reason: "activities inimical to the State" and "contact with Dr. Schmutzler who had been sentenced for attitudes inimical to the State."

June 1958: The District Court of Rostock sentenced students of the Marine Architecture faculty of the University of Rostock Klaus Worofsky and Carl-Peter Hendrich to a total of four years and five months in prison. Reason: they had protested against the firing for political reasons of the chief of the faculty Professor Geerts and had incited their fellow students to boycott his successor's lectures. This, the State called "an organized putsch against the power of the State."

September 1958: The District Court of Halle sentenced philosophy students Heinrich Blobner and Seifert of the Martin Luther University each to seven years in prison. Reason: they had organized "illegal meetings with students from West Germany."

September 1958: The District Court of Gera sentenced four students of the Friedrich Schiller University of Jena Thomas Ammer to 15 years, Peter Herrmann and Gert Froemmel to 14 years each, and Friedhelm Froehlich to 8 years in prison. Reason: the accused had drawn up a 10-point "counter-revolutionary program" in which, among other things, they demanded free elections and the liquidation of unprofitable agricultural cooperatives. In three other trials the same court in October sentenced 24 students of the Jena University to more than 58 years in prison. The reason given in each case was "a platform inimical to the State and the formation of inimical groups in high schools, having counter-revolutionary aims."

Secret Trial of SED Docents, Die Welt, 25 April 1959

Under exclusion of the public, the Potsdam District Court has sentenced three former docents of the East Berlin University to eight years in prison each.

The men are sociologists Crueger, Lauer and Saar. All three belong to the SED. About a year ago all of them suddenly disappeared from the ken of man. Only now has the news trickled out that they had been sentenced in a secret trial.

From the scanty information known about the charges, it would appear that for some considerable time the three men had called for a change of personnel in the SED Politburo and the Central Committee, the firing of party chief Ulbricht and the transformation of the "National People's Army" into a "Democratic People's Militia." Furthermore, they had dreamed of a "parliamentarization" of the East Zone. For six months representatives of the SED Central Committee had been seeking the perpetrators of this "conception inimical to the Party." More than half the docents and lecturers were changed before it was possible to identify Crueger, Lauer and Saar as the originators of the ideas. A particularly damaging accusation against them was the fact that they had brought in from the West forbidden Marxist literature--such as the writings of Trotsky and Rosa Luxemburg.